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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001539

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TAGS: PREL MOPS MASS KDEM LE EZ

SUBJECT: LEBANESE ISF DISCUSSING ASSISTANCE WITH CZECHS

Classified By: Pol-Econ Counselor Mike Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Lebanese Internal Security Force is discussing training and equipment needs with the Czechs. Following a visit to Prague this month, the GOCR is waiting for the GOL to provide a list of requirements, and will then determine what can be provided within the context of Czech assistance. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) At the invitation of Czech Minister of Interior Ivan Langer, Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) officials visited the Czech Republic December 12-16, following a similar visit to Poland. Czech MFA Director of the Middle East Department Pavel Rezac told Poloff on December 20 that the purpose of the visit was to ascertain the needs of the ISF with the aim of identifying additional ways the Czechs can support the Siniora government. ISF Deputy Director General Jabbour led the delegation. (ISF Director General Rifi originally planned to come, but concluded at the last minute he could not leave Lebanon because of the current crisis.)

¶3. (C) Lebanese Charge Hadi Jabar told Pol-Econ Counselor on December 18 that the ISF decided to discuss equipment and technical assistance with the Czechs and Poles as a result of offers the two countries had made to support Lebanon following this summer's violence. Jabar said the visit went well and that he expected the ISF would soon be sending him a concrete list of requests for the Czech government. He said the GOL hopes that some of the possible hardware procurements will be provided in the context of Czech official assistance, but added that the Lebanese expect they may have to purchase some equipment. Jabar went on to explain that he believes reinforcing the police is critical to the survival of the Siniora government, and that he hoped the USG would offer encouragement to the Czechs to provide the requested equipment or training.

¶4. (C) MFA staff on December 21 confirmed that in their view the visit went well. The ISF delegation visited the Czech Police Academy to observe riot control techniques and training procedures. They inspected protective gear used by Czech security forces and armored vehicles manufactured by Czech firm Svos. During the visit, the delegation also met with Deputy Interior Minister Jaroslav Salivar and Deputy Foreign Minister Jaroslav Basta to discuss possible cooperation. The MFA is now waiting for the ISF, following consultations with Director Rifi, to specify the equipment, arms, or training desired from the Czechs. Asked whether the Czechs are prepared to meet the Lebanese requirements from their assistance budget, MFA staff report that training and technical assistance would not be a problem, and that equipment or arms that exist in MOD or MOI stocks could be donated. The extent to which the GOCR could support other procurement depends on the specific request. The GOCR earlier this year dedicated approx. \$400,000 to support

reconstruction in Lebanon. MFA officers also confirmed that the Czechs view their support for the ISF as being in line with UN and EU commitments to support the Siniora government.

MUNTER